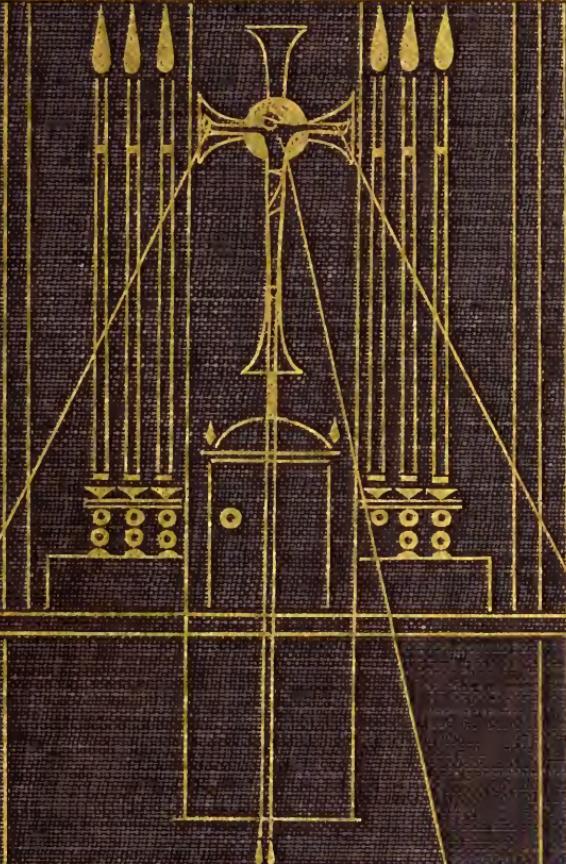


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POEMS OF ADORATION



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POEMS OF ADORATION
BY
MICHAEL FIELD

SANDS & CO. LONDON & EDINBURGH

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DESOLATION

WHO comes ? . . .
O Beautiful !
Low thunder thrums,
As if a chorus struck its shawms and drums.
The sun runs forth
To stare at Him, who journeys north
From Edom, from the lonely sands, arrayed
In vesture sanguine as at Bosra made.
O beautiful and whole,
In that red stole !

Behold,
O clustered grapes,
His garment rolled,
And wrung about His waist in fold on fold !
See, there is blood
Now on His garment, vest and hood ;
For He hath leapt upon a loaded vat,
And round His motion splashes the wine-fat,
Though there is none to play
The Vintage-lay.

The Word
Of God, His name . . .
But nothing heard
Save beat of His lone feet forever stirred
To tread the press—
None with Him in His loneliness ;
No treader with Him in the spume, no man.

His flesh shows dusk with wine : since He began
He hath not stayed, that forth may pour
The Vineyard's store.

He treads
The angry grapes . . .
Their anger spreads,
And all its brangling passion sheds
In blood. O God,
Thy wrath, Thy wine-press He hath trod—
The fume, the carnage, and the murderous heat !
Yet all is changed by patience of the feet :
The blood sinks down ; the vine
Is issued wine.

O task
Of sacrifice,
That we may bask
In clemency and keep an undreamt Pasch !
O Treader lone,
How pitiful Thy shadow thrown
Athwart the lake of wine that Thou hast made !
O Thou, most desolate, with limbs that wade
Among the berries, dark and wet,
Thee we forget !

ENTBEHREN SOLLST DU

'NEATH the Garden of Gethsemane's
Olive-wood,
Thou didst cast Thy will away from Thee
In Thy blood.

Through the shade, when torches spat their light,
And arms shone,
Thou didst find Thy lovers and Thy friends
Were all gone.

In the Judgment Hall, Thy hands and feet
Bound with cord,
Thou didst lose Thy freedom's sweetness—all
Thy freedom, Lord.

In the Soldiers' Hall, Thy Sovereignty
Laughed to naught,
Thou wert scourged, Thy brow by bramble-wreath
Sharply caught.

Stripped of vest and garments Thou didst lie,
Mid hill-moss,
Naked, helpless as a nurse's child,
On Thy cross.

Raised, Thou gavest to another son,
Standing by,
Her who bore Thee once, and, deep in pain,
Watched Thee die.

All was cast away from Thee ; and then,
With wild drouth,
“ Why dost Thou forsake me, Father ? ” broke
From Thy mouth.

Everything gone from Thee, even daylight ;
None to trust ;
Thou didst render up Thy holy Life
To the dust.

Help me, from my passion, to recall
Thy sheer loss,
And adore the sovereign nakedness
Of Thy Cross !

FREGIT

ON the night of dedication
Of Thyself as our oblation,
Christ, Belovèd, Thou didst take
In Thy very hands and break. . . .

O my God, there is the hiss of doom
When new-glowing flowers are snapt in bloom ;
When shivered, as a little thunder-cloud,
A vase splits on the floor its brilliance loud ;
Or lightning strikes a willow-tree with gash
Cloven for death in a resounded crash ;
And I have heard that one who could betray
His country and yet face the breadth of day,
Bowed himself, weeping, but to hear his sword
Broken before him, as his sin's award.
These were broken ; Thou didst break. . . .

Thou the Flower that Heaven did make
Of our race the crown of light ;
Thou the Vase of Chrysolite
Into which God's balm doth flow ;
Thou the Willow hung with woe
Of our exile harps ; Thou Sword
Of the Everlasting Word—
Thou, betrayed, Thyself didst break
Thy own Body for our sake :
Thy own Body Thou didst take
In Thy holy hands—and break.

SICUT PARVULI

WITH me, laid upon my tongue,
As upon Thy Mother's knee
Thou wert laid at Thy Nativity ;
And she felt Thee lie her wraps among.

Tenderest pressure, dint of grace,
All she dreamed and loved in God,
As a shoot from an old Patriarch's rod,
Laid upon her, felt by her embrace.

O my God, to have Thee, feel Thee mine,
In Thy helpless Presence ! Love,
Not to dream of Thee in power above,
But receive Thee, Little One divine !

As the burthen of a seal
May give kingdoms with its touch,
Lo, Thy meek preponderance is such,
I am straight ennobled as I kneel.

Teach me, tiny Godhead, to adore
On my flesh Thy tender weight,
As Thy Mother, bowing, owned how great
Was the Child that unto us she bore.

AURUM, THUS, ET MYRRHA—
ALLELUIA !

O GIFT, O Blessèd Sacrament—*my Gold*,
All that I live by royally, the power,
Like gold, that buys life for me, hour by hour,
And crowns me with a greatness manifold
Such that my spirit scarce hath spring to hold
Its treasure and its sovereignty of dower !

O Blessèd Sacrament—*my Frankincense*,
God raised aloft in His Divinity,
Sweet-smelling as the dry and precious tree,
That spreads round sacrifice an odour dense,
Hiding with mystic offering our offence ;
O holy Balm of God that pleads for me !

O Gift, O Blessèd Sacrament—*my Myrrh* !
Thou art to die for me—a holy Thing,
That will preserve my soul from festering,
Nor may it feel mortality, the stir
And motion into dust, if Thou confer
On it Thy bitter strength of cherishing !

HOLY COMMUNION

IN the Beginning—and in me,
Flesh of my flesh, O Deity,

Bone of my bone ;
In me alone

Create, as if on Thy sixth day,
I, of frail breath and clay,
Were yet one seed with Thee,
Engendering Trinity !

My Lord, the honour of great fear
To be Thy teeming *fiat* here ;

In blood and will
Urged to fulfil

Thy rounded motion of behest ;
One with Thy power and blest
To act by aim and right
Of Thy prevenient might !

OF SILENCE

“BE it done unto me
According to Thy word. . . .”
Into Mortality
Slips the Eternal Word,
When not a sound is heard.

She spake those words, and then
Was silent in her heart ;
Mother of Silence, when
Her will spake from her heart
Her lips had done their part.

And only once we hear
Her words that intercede ;
Her will so sweetly clear
Those lips should intercede,
And help men in their need.

Out of her silence grew
The Word, and as a man
He neither cried nor knew
The strivings of a man,
When doom for Him began.

And after He had gone
From Earth to Heaven away,
He came and lingered on ;
He would not pass away,
But with His people stay.

Son of the Silent Maid,
He chose her silence too.
In dumbness He hath stayed,
Dumbness unbroken too,
Past measure—as night-dew.

O quiet, holy Host,
Our pondering Joy and Light,
In Thy still power engrossed,
As a mute star pleads light,
Thou pleadest, Infinite !

REAL PRESENCE

I APPROACH Thy Altar . . . Stay !

Let me break away !

Level stones of marble, brazen lights,
Linen spread, flowers on the shelves and
heights—

I bow down, I kneel . . .

And far away, where the sun sets, would reel !

For from forth Thy altar Thou

Strikest on me now,

Strikest on me, firm and warm to thrill,

With the charm of one whose touch could kill ;

Giving me desire

Toward substance, yet for flight the lightning's
fire.

So, if close a lover kneels,

Praying close, one feels

All the body's flow of life reined tight,

As when waters struggle at their height ;

From Thy altar-stone,

Thou in my body bodily art known.

And I fear Thee worse than death,

As we fear Love's breath :

Thou art as a tiger round a camp ;

And I kindle, terrified, my lamp,

Since I cannot fly,

But to hold Thee distant, lest I die.

Thou art God, and in the mesh,
Close to me, of flesh ;
And we love and we have been in range
Of wild secracies of interchange :
 Could I bear Thee near
I should be humble to Thee—but I *fear* !

FROM THE HIGHWAY

KING OF KINGS, Thou comest down the street
 To my door . . .
As from ankles of the heavenly feet
Of wild angels, tinkling pedals sweet,
 And sweet bells ;
As if water-carriers from bright wells
Jangled freshets to a dewless land,
 Thou art called upon the air,
As Thou mountest to me, stair by stair :
 In my presence Thou dost stand,
And Thou comest to me on my bed . . .
 Lord, I live and am not dead !
 I should be dead—
I, a sinner ! And Thou comest swift . . .
Woe, to wake such love to roam about,
Wandering the street to find me out,
Bringing wholesome balm for gift,
As, in contrariety,
Come to Magdalen, not she,
 O Pure, to Thee !

“THAT HE SHOULD TASTE DEATH FOR EVERY MAN”

IN all things Thou art like us and content,
Bowing, receiv'st Thy sacrament.
What is it ?—that Thou kneelest meek ?
And what the gift that Thou dost seek
Beside us at Thy altars ? Hour by hour,
What is it lays up in Thee holy power ?
Christ, if Thou comest suppliant
It is to Death, the Celebrant !
Death gives the wafer of his dust ;
The ashes of his harvest thrust
Upon Thy tongue Thou tastest, then
Dost swallow for the sake of men.
O Brightness of the Heavens, to save
Thy creatures Thou dost eat the grave !

Our Sacrament—oh, generous !—of wheat,
The dust that out of corn we eat,
Whiteness of Life's fair grain ! O Christ,
No grinding of the cornfield had sufficed
To lay upon our tongues Thy holy Bread,
Unless Thou hadst Thyself so harshly fed
With grindings of the bone of death, the grit
That once was beauty and the form of it ;
Once welcome, now so sharp to taste ;
Once featured, now the dregs of waste ;
Of hope once filled, now lacking aught
Of treasure to be sold or bought—

Dust of our substance Thou each day
Dost taste of in its fated clay . . .
O soul, take thought ! It is thy God
That to His lips presses this choking sod !

NIMIS HONORATI SUNT

“CAST not your pearls down before
swine !”

The words are Thine !—

Listen, cast not

The treasure of a white sea-grot,
An uncontaminate, round loveliness,
A pearl of ocean-waters fathomless,
A secret of exceeding, cherished light,
A dream withdrawn from evening infinite,
A beauty God gave silence to—cast not
This wealth from treasury of Indian seas,
Or Persian fisheries,
Down in the miry dens that clot
The feet of swine, who trample, hide and blot.

To us Thy words ! . . . But, see,
In Thy idolatry
Of us, all thought

Of counsel fails and falls to nought !

Pearl of Great Price, within the monstrance set,
Why wilt Thou for Thyself Thy charge forget ?
O Love, from deeps before the world began,
O Sheltered of God’s Bosom, why for man
Wilt Thou so madly in the slough be cast,
Concealed ’mid tramplings and disgrace of swine ?

O Host, O White, Benign !

Why spend in rage of love at last
Thy wisdom all eternity amassed ?

BLESSED ARE THE BEGGARS

MATT. v. 3

I

TAKE me along with thee, O blessed, seeking
one!

Take me along with thee! Thou art not poor;
Arimathea doth thy wealth immure;
Thou hast a garden in the country sun;
Thou hast a new, clean-chiselled grave awaits thee,
A grave, self-chosen, neither low nor narrow;
And thou couldst bring excess of myrrh and aloë
As gift where thou dost love,
If thou thy love wouldest prove:
Yet must thou beg. A beggar Pilate rates thee,
Coming to beg the body of thy Lord,
Cast from the Cross by men, of thee adored.*

II

Take me along with thee, and let me learn thy
prayer!

Take me along with thee! I must prevail.
For all that I possess is void and stale
Unless I have God's Body in my care.
Kneeling together, make for both petition!
Only upon our knees shall we receive Him,
Only by importunity achieve Him,

* "This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus."—Luke xxiii. 52.

And crying with one need.
Prompt in thy grace, give heed !
I am a beggar of thy wild condition :
I huddle to thy side, my hope is thine,
Thy will my will—His Body must be mine.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

LO, from Thy Father's bosom Thou dost sigh ;
Deep to Thy restlessness His ear is bent :—
“ Father, the Paraclete is sent,
Wrapt in a foaming wind He passeth by.
Behold, men's hearts are shaken—I must die :
Sure as a star within the firmament
Must be my dying : lo, my wood is rent,
My cross is sunken ! “ Father, I must die ! ”
Lo, how God loveth us, He looseth hold. . . .
His Son is back among us, with His own,
And craving at our hands an altar-stone.
Thereon, a victim, meek He takes his place ;
And, while to offer Him His priests make bold,
He looketh upward to His Father's Face.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

I

GATHER, gather,
Drawn by the Father,
Drawn to the dear procession of His Son !
They are bearing His Body. . . . Run
To the Well-Belovèd ! Haste to Him,
Who down the street passeth secretly,
Adorned with Seraphim,
Still as the blooms of an apple-tree.

II

Gather, gather,
Drawn by the Father !
Not now He dwelleth in the Virgin's womb :
In the harvests He hath His room ;
From the lovely vintage, from the wheat,
From the harvests that we this year have grown,
He giveth us His flesh to eat,
And in very substance makes us His own.

III

Gather, gather,
Drawn by the Father !
The sun is down, it is the sundown hour.
He, who set the fair sun to flower,
And the stars to rise and fall—

Kneel, and your garments before Him spread !
Kneel, He loveth us all ;
He is come in the breaking of Bread.

IV

Gather, gather
(Drawn by the Father),
To our God who is shown to us so mild,
Borne in our midst, a child !
He is King and with an orb so small :
And not a word will He say,
Nor on the Angels call,
Though we trample Him down on the way.
On the Holy Angels He will not call . . .
Oh, guard Him with breasts impregnable !

Sept. 25-26, 1908

COLUMBA MEA

“Una est Columba mea, perfecta mea.”

DOVE of the Holy Dove,
His one, His mate—
One art thou, single in thy mortal state
To be the chosen of Love,
His one, white Dove,
For whom He left His place in Trinity,
Letting His pinions fall
Low to the earth, that His great power might be
Around thee, nor appal,
But, soft in singleness of strength, might bring
The glory of the Father and the Son
To thee, the chosen One,
Amid the sounding clash of each vast wing.

His Perfect, thou art made
Immaculate ;
For thou with dovelike whiteness must elate
That Heavenly Spouse arrayed,
Beyond all shade,
In whiteness of the Godhead of God's throne,
That loves in utter white
From Person unto Person, and alone
Had dwelt in His pure light,
Until one day the Holy Dove was sent
To Thee, O Mary, thee, O Dove on earth,
And God the Son had birth
Of thee, Perfection of thy God's intent.

VIRGO POTENS

YOUNG on the mountains and fresh
As the wind that thrills her hair,
As the dews that lap the flesh
Of her feet from cushions of thyme ;
While her feet through the herbage climb,
Growing hardier, sweeter still
On rock-roses and cushions of thyme,
As she springs up the hill !

A goat in its vaultings less lithe,
From rock, to a tuft, to a rock ;
As the young of wild-deer blithe,
The young of wild-deer, yet alone :
Strong as an eaglet just flown,
She wanders the white-woven earth,
As the young of wild-deer, yet alone,
In her triumph of mirth.

She will be Mother of God !
Secret He lies in her womb :
And this mountain she hath trod
Was later in strength than is she,
Who before its mass might be
Was chosen to bear her bliss :
Conceived before mountains was she,
Before any abyss.

The might that dwells in her youth
Is song to her heart and soul,
Of joy that, as joy, is truth,

That magnifies, and leaps
With its jubilant glee and sweeps,
O fairest, her breast, her throat,
Her mouth, and magnanimous leaps,
As the mountain-lark's note !

Across the old hills she springs,
With God's first dream as her crown :
She scales them swift, for she brings
Elizabeth news of grace.
The charity of her face
Is that of a lovely day,
When the birds are singing news of grace,
And the storms are away.

ANOTHER LEADETH THEE

IN whose hands, O Son of God,
Was Thy earthly Mission held ?
Not in Thine, that made earth's sod,
And the ocean as it welled
From creation to the shore ;
Not in Thine, whose fingers' lore
Checked the tide with golden bars,
Ruled the clouds and dintered stars—
Not in Thine, that made fresh leaves,
And the flourished wheat for sheaves ;
Grapes that bubbled from a spring,
Where the nightingale might sing
From the blood of her wild throat ;
Not in Thine that struck her note ;
Maned the lion and wrought the lamb ;
Breathed on clay, “ Be as I am ! ”
And it stood before Thee fair,
Thinking, loving, furnished rare,
Like Thee, so beyond compare. . . .

Not within Thy hands !—Behold,
By a woman's hand unrolled
All the mystery sublime
Of Thy ableness through Time !
Thou, in precious Boyhood, knew
For Thy Father what to do ;
And delayed Thyself to hear
Questions and to answer clear
To the Doctors' chiming throng,

Thou, admired, wert set among.
Straight Thy Mission was begun,
As the Jewish Rabbis spun
Round Thy fetterless, sweet mind
Problems no one had divined.
But Thy Mother came that way,
Who had sought Thee day by day,
And her crystal voice reproved
Thy new way with Thy beloved.
In Thy wisdom-widened eyes
Throbbed a radiance of surprise :
But, Thy Mother having chidden,
Thou in Nazareth wert hidden ;
And Thy Father's Work begun
Stayed full eighteen years undone,
Till Thou camest on Thine hour,
When Thy Mother loosed Thy power
For Thy Father's business, said,
In a murmur softly spread,
Rippling to a happy few,
“ What He says unto you do ! ”
As the spring-time to a tree,
Sudden spring she was to Thee,
When her strange appeal began
Thy stayed Mission unto man ;
Stayed but by her earlier blame,
When from three days' woe she came ;
Yet renewed when she gave sign
“ Son, they have not any wine ! ”

Holy trust and love ! She gave

For Thy sake oblation brave
Of her will, her spotless name :
Thou for her didst boldly tame
God the Word to wait on her ;
God's own Wisdom might not stir
Till her lovely voice decreed.
Thou wouldest have our hearts give heed,
And revere her lovely voice ;
Wait upon her secret choice,
Stay her pleasure, as didst Thou,
With a marvel on Thy brow,
And a silence on Thy breath.
We must cherish what she saith ;
As she pleadeth we must hope
For our deeds' accepted scope,
Humble as her Heavenly Son,
Till our liberty be won.

THE GARDEN OF LAZARUS

IN a garden at Bethany,
 O Mother, Mother, Mother !
Amid the passion-flowers and olive-leaves—
 His Mother—
Yet, behold, how tranquilly
 She is sad and grieves,
Though her Son is gone away,
And she knows Passover Day
 Will not leave her Lamb, her Child unslain !
He hath spoken to deaf ears,
All save hers, of mortal pain
 And of parting, yet she has no tears. . . .
 He is gone away
With His chosen few to eat the Pasch,
Leaving in the eyes, she raised to ask,
Mute assurance He would come no more
Back to Bethany, nor Lazarus' door.
 O Mother, Mother, Mother !—
But she keeps so many things apart
In their silence, pondering them by heart ;
Always she has pondered in her heart ;
And it knows her Son is Son of God. . . .
Silently she gazes where He trod
Down the valley to Jerusalem—
 His Mother !
Round her birds are at their parting song
To the light that will not strike them long ;
And the flowers are very gold
With the light before whose loss they fold.

Keen the song, as on each wing,
And on each rose and each rose-stem
 Full the burnishing.

She hath crossed her hands around her breast,
And it seems her heart is taking rest
With some Mystery her spirit heeds. . . .
Song of Songs the birds now chaunt,
And the lilies vaunt
How among them, white, He feeds,
Who but now hath left her—fair and white
As the lover of the Sunamite.

•
In the city, in an upper room,
As fair Paschal Bread He breaks and gives
Unto men His Body while He lives—
Then seeks out a Garden for His Doom.

HOLY CROSS

MYSTERIOUS sway of mortal blood,
That urges me upon Thy wood !—

O Holy Cross, but I must tell
My love ; how all my forces dwell
Upon Thee and around Thee day and night !
I love the Feet upon thy beam,
As a wild lover loves his dream ;
My eyes can only fix upon that sight.

O Tree, my arms are strong and sore
To clasp Thee, as when we adore
The body of our dearest in our arms !
Each pang I suffer hath for aim
Thy wood—its comfort is the same—
A taint, an odour from inveterate balms.

My clasp is filled, my sight receives
The compass of its power ; pain grieves
About each sense but as a languid hum :
And, out of weariness, at length,
My day rejoices in its strength,
My night that innocence of strife is come.

PURGATORY

PERFECTION of my God !—
With hands on the same rod,
With robes that interfold,
One weft together rolled ;
With two wings of one Dove
Stretched the royal heads above—
God severs from His Son,
That what is not be won ;
Immortal, mortal grow,
God entering manhood know
What was not and shall be
Of cogent Deity.

Perfection of my soul !—
How shall I reach my goal,
Unless I leave His Face,
Who is my dwelling-place,
Unless in exile do
His will a short while through,
To the time's sharpest rim :
Unless, deprived of Him,
I may achieve Him, lie
His victim, sigh on sigh,
Bearing consummate pain,
Supremely to attain ?

FORTITUDO EGENIS

LOVER of Souls, Immaculate,
Mary, by thy Immaculate Conception,
Thy soul and body white for God's reception,
Beyond the ridg'd snows on the sky ;
Beyond the treasure of white beams that lie
Within the golden casket of the sun ;
By the excelling franchise of thy state,
Plead for the Holy Souls, O Holiest One !

Till they be cleansed grief hath no date !
Them, through thy spotless grace, embolden
To passion for their God, but once beholding,
Nor ever more beheld till pain
Hath made their souls' recesses bright from stain.
Plead they may swiftly see Him, nor may shun
The Vision, each achieved immaculate !
Pure from the first, plead for them, Holiest One !

PAX VOBISCUM
To NOTRE DAME DE BOULOGNE

MY heart is before thee, Queen,
As a mariner at sea—
It vows its sighs that swell to thee,
Sighs as great as against waves may be.

For thou art above the waves,
On their summits thou dost float ;
Thy locks of gold along thy throat ;
Thou more gold than gold upon thy boat.

Pomp of thy body, thy Child—
On thy arm, small-crowned and sweet ;
Thou, large-crowned ! Where billows meet,
Why these crowns, like shocks of golden wheat ?

The Prince of Peace He is. . . .
As a mariner at sea,
When waves are high and thronging free,
High my heart entreats thy Son and thee.

PURISSIMÆ VIRGINI SACELLUM

IT is new in the air from the sea and the height,

New as a nest by a sea-bird fashioned . . .

O Carmel, thy mound the rock-site! . . .

And roofless our chapel, the home we, impassioned,
Have built for her coming, O Gift from the Sea !
Elijah, our father, descend to thy mountain,
Where once was thy shrine, God created by flame ;
Where from a land dry in well as in fountain
Thou did'st keep vigil—as we—till she came,
The Cloud from God's Bosom, the Grace of His favour,

The sweetness of Rain ! O balm, oh, the savour
Of air on the throat ! O Desire from the Sea !

Surrounded by roses and lilies of valleys,
Sweeter than myrrh, or than balsam in chalice,
Queen of the East, O Magnificent, bring

The sweetness familiar as rain to man's cry ;
Murmur as rain round our hearts lest we die,
White Cloud of felicity, Voice to our ears !

Girt with vale-lilies and roses a spring-day appears,
But Thou, Queen of Carmel, art Spring.

Surely the last, we are first in our glory :

Splendid out-broke in our desert the story

How flame that fell down on our shrine at the call

Of our father Elijah had fallen down on all.

So Christ is received of us, Carmel receives Him,

The stones and the dust and the sea-winds
believe Him :
But after God's Fire there is hope of God's
Rain.
To us art thou come, O Abundance of Rain !

Thy little, roofless sanctuary, Queen,
Finds us in winds, in sunset or at night,
With stars to help our candles, wild and free
As Pagans by their Virgin of moonlight,
Diana of the Hunters' rocks : so we
Upon the heights, and in the breeze are seen,
And called the Brothers of thy lovely name,
Blest Mary of Mount Carmel. Asia, cry
Her splendour ! Cry to her, O Eastern Kings,
Encompass her ! She is our very own,
In mercy manifest to us alone,
Our Cloud of Mercy that from seaward springs,
And crouched Elijah sought for, sigh on sigh.

And for our thanks . . . O Eastern Kings, your
treasure

In this may serve us, that a pearl may lurk,
Or in your chests there may be jewel-work
That, as she is a Queen, might give her pleasure.
We are her monks, we have no precious things.

Close round her, Kings !

With frankincense and myrrh,

Open a fount for her !

With cloth of gold proclaim her and enthrone !
Afar off we will weep—she is our own.

IN THE BEGINNING

HOW still these two !
Christ with far eyes, John with the fond eyes
closed,
And close unto
The breast wherfrom is peace—
No slumber that shall cease,
But charmed safety of a faith as sure
As a mountain's founding to endure :
And warm as sleep John's love
For the rapt Face above.

Far-rapt, Christ's eyes,
In strength, remember His own resting-place,
Where, in this wise,
He, the Eternal Word,
Had kept deep lull unstirred,
Upon the bosom of the Father laid ;
And, of that peace divined,
Knew the Eternal mind.

Then the raised Face
Breaks soft and the eyes droop and bend above
The sweet head's place,
Where from closed eyelids John
Setteth his love upon
God, his Lord, his Thought, his Lover dear :
And, in lapse of silence falling clear,
One heareth only this—
On the sweet head, a kiss.

AN ANTIPHONY OF ADVENT

AD LAUDES

I

COME to a revel, happy men !
Far away on the hills a wine of joy
Makes golden dew in drops, that cloy
 The fissures of the glen,
 The crevices of rock ;
Caught in its sweetness thyme and cistus lock ;
The hills are white and gold
 In every fold ;
The hills are running milk and honey-rivers ;
Yet not a thyrsus on a mountain quivers.

II

Does not the distant city cry,
As if filled with an unexpected rout,
Alleluia, shout on shout ?
 Nor can the city high
 Exult in song enough,
Tuning to smoothness all her highways rough.
And yet the Bromian god
 Hath never trod
With choir the pavements, nor each grape-haired
 dancer
Given to the mountain-streams a city's answer.

III

Behold, O men, a vivid light !
Is it the lightning-fire that blazes wide,

Or torches lit on every side
That turn the sky so bright ?
Through this great, sudden day,
No levin-gendered god's triumphant way
The brands of pine confess :
A loveliness
Within that mighty light of larger story
Is come among us with exceeding glory.

IV

Ye that would drink, come forth and drink !
Within the hills are rivers white and gold ;
Clear mid the day a portent to behold.
Stoop at the water's brink,
Seek where the light is great !
Why should the revellers for revel wait ?
Now ye can drink as thirsty stags
Where no source flags.
Forth to the water-brooks, forth in the morning ;
Forth to the light that out of light is dawning !

V

Tiresias, with thy wreath, not thou !
Gray prophet of the fount of Thebes, behold
A prophet neither blind nor old,
Spare and of solemn brow,
Is risen to make all young :
He dwells among
The freshets of the stream. Come to the Waters ;
O Sons of Adam, haste, and Eva's daughters !

This revel, children, is a revelry
Ascetic, of a joy that cannot be
Unless we fast and pray and wear no wreaths,
Nor brandish cones the forest-fir bequeathes,
Nor make a din—but sweet antiphonies—
Nor blow through organ-reeds to sing to these,
But of ourselves make song : it is a feast,
That by the breath of deserts is increased ;
And by ablution in the river lifts
Its grain to crystal—earth so full of gifts
Most exquisite, breaths that are infinite
Of infinite judgment, hesitations light
Of infinite choiceness, life so fine, so fine,
Since of our flesh we welcome the Divine ;
Since by our fast and reticence, our food
From honey-bees in haunts of solitude,
O mighty Prophet of the river-bank,
We see that light that makes the sun a blank,
As a white dove makes a whole region dim ;
See in the greatness of the great Light's rim
One we must fall down under would we win
The ecstasy of revel—all our sin
Borne from us by the Wine-Cup in a hand
That bleeds about the vessel's golden stand,
Bleeds as the white throat of a lamb just slain.
Behold ! No *Evoe* at that poured red stain,
No *Evoe*—*Alleluia !* He is dumb :
But let us laud Him, Eleutherius come !

ANNUNCIATIONS

“BLESSÈD art Thou among women, Mary !”
Through white wings,
The angel brings
Of a Saviour’s birth annunciation—
Tidings of great joy to one afraid.

“Blessèd art thou Simon, son of Jonah !”
In his power,
His smile as dower,
Of His Church’s birth, annunciation
Is by God Himself, no angel, made.

Blessèd art Thou, Mary ; blessed, Peter !
But the grace
Of God’s own face
Is on Peter for annunciation,
When he speaks, by flesh and blood unswayed.

STONES OF THE BROOK

FORTH from a cloud,
Loosed as a greyhound is loosed,
 To sweep down the sky,
 To sweep down the hill,
A torrent of water unnoosed—
 The rain rushes on aloud,
And becometh a stream on the earth, and still
Growtheth and spreadeth as its stream sweeps by.

And the stones of its course
Are bright with its joy as it leaps
 Around them in might,
 Beyond them in joy ;
For it sings round the rocky heaps,
 From the brightness of its force ;
Nor can pebbles nor boulders of granite cloy
In their multitude the stream's delight.

With a torrent's bliss,
The Martyr Stephen receives
 The stones for his head,
 The stones for his breast,
And smiles from his strength that believes :
“ Sweet stones of the brook ! ”—for this
Is the singing, the song of his heart expressed,
As he kneels, looking up, his hands outspread.

A river of blood, the tide
Of martyrdom, gathers round
 His soul as a stream ;

While the stones are drenched
With tides of his blood as they bound
 From temple and mouth and side . . .
Stones of offence, dark stones from the torrent
 wrenched,
Ye strike the trend of his joy as a dream !

RELICS

AN alabaster box,
A tomb of precious stone—
White, with white bars, as white
 As billows on a sea :
 With spaces where some flush
Of sky-like rose is conscious and afraid
 Of whiteness and white bars.
A lovely sepulchre of loveliest stone,
 This alabaster box—
 Coy as a maiden's blood in flush,
 White as a maiden's breast in stretch,
 Alive with fear and grace ;
 Transparent rose,
 Translucent white ;
A treasury of precious stone,
 A strange, long tomb . . .
'Twas Maximin, who had this casket made,
The holy Maximin, who travelled once
With Mary Magdalén, and preached with her ;
 Till on a wind as quiet
 As it had been a cloud,
She was removed by Christ to dwell alone.

Alone she dwelt, her peace
A thought that never fell
 From its full tide.
Ever beside her in her cave,
 A vase of golden curls,
 A clod of blooded earth.

And when she died at last, and Maximin
Must bury her ;
Being man and holy, in his love
He laid her in an alabaster box,
As she had laid her soul's deep penitence,
Her soul's deep passion, a sweet balm,
within
An alabaster box :
So Maximin gave Magdalen to God—
Shut as a spice in precious stone,
In bland and flushing box
Of alabaster stone.
And knowing all her secrets, Maximin,
Being man and holy, laid within
The priceless cave of alabaster two
Most precious, cherished things—
A vase of curly hair,
A vase of golden web ;
A clod of withered soil,
A clod of blooded earth.

The curls were crushed together in gold lump,
Crushed by the hand that wiped
The Holy Feet, kept in a crush of gold,
Just as they dabbed the sweetly smelling Feet—
The curls enwoven by the balm they dried,
Knotted as rose of Sharon, when the winds
Sweep it along the desert. . . . Curls, of power
To float the charm of Eve in aureole
Round her they covered, till she crushed them
tight

To dab the Holy Feet, and afterward
Be severed from their growth,
Stiff in their balm and gold ;
A piece of honeycomb in rings and web ;
Sweetness of shorn, gold, unguent-dabbled
 hair,
A handful in a vase.

The clod, a bit of hill-turf dry ;
The turf that sheep might pull up as they
 graze ;
Or men might throw upon the fire
At sundown when the air is loosed and cold :
 A clod an eagle might
 Ascend to build with, or a goat
 Kick down a valley's side ;
 A clod dark-red
As if it mothered ruby of the mines.
The hand that gathered it one hollow night
 Gathered it up red-wet from Golgotha.
Three crosses lay about the grass—
Such arms and shafts of crosses on the grass !—
 When she, who gathered, crept
 Among the prostrate arms ;
Roused a great death-bird from the ground,
 And, in its place,
Bent down and pressed her lips where it had
 couched,
And lifted up the ground to press her heart ;
And went her way, hugging the Sacred Blood
 As in a sponge of turf,

That dried about the treasure, now grown hard,
As if it mothered ruby of the mines—
A clod of blooded soil.

O Relics of the Holy Magdalen !
The balmy hair her plea,
God's Blood her grace :
Within a vase her gift,
Within a turf-clod His—
Her relics, by her corpse ;
All she had cared to keep,
Through hermit years of life,
To bless her in her tomb
Till Judgment-Day.

ON CAUCASUS

LO, Crimean marble-quarries tower
Colder even than snow-peaks in their power,
 To the very heart stone-white :
 And the Christian captives strain
 On the hillsides in their pain,
As they toil for Trajan day and night.

Who is this who comes with stirless brow,
And sweet eyes that never could allow
 Rebels save upon their knees ?
Through the hills a voice is fanned
 That Pope Clement hath been banned
Straightly to the marble Chersonese.

Toiling with his people 'mid the rocks,
On a streamless slope, the quarried blocks
 He compels to whiteness clear.
There a bitter cry is made
 Of the thirst that, unallayed,
Dreams of well, or freshet, or wide mere.

He hath climbed to pray. . . . A lamb he sees,
Pawing gladly in the mountain-breeze,
 Very golden unto snow :
 Lamb of God, cross-aureoled,
 Lovely on His vertex bold,
Set above a River's gush and flow.

By the brazen footstroke is expressed
Impetus as of God's River blest.

Dew and snow in all their shine
Round that heavenly Lamb and Stream
Take the lustre of their dream,
In a flood and blush of flame combine.

On the heavens, from Patmos' shore,
John beheld this crystal sight before—

Not to bring a people aid ;
But, sweet Clement, thou hast seen, on earth
God's own Lamb, His River's birth ;
How He shone and how its waters played !

IN THE SEA

(THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. CLEMENT)

“Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy ! Save him,
save ! ”—

“Father, receive my spirit from the wave.”

ROLLS the great Sea of the Chersonese
Tossed and facing him and these. . . .
Cold in waters, high in heap
As a quarry should it sweep
With a landslip down on men :
And it roars as in its den
Roars a monster apt for blood.
He must journey on this flood
To the harbour of his soul ;
He must seek his furthest goal,
With an anchor round his neck,
From yon tossing vessel’s deck
Cast to drown, when out at sea
Full three miles that ship may be.
And his fellow-exiles cry,
“Let him not, Lord Jesus, die ! ”

On the clouds the vessel is a spot.

“Lord Jesus, save him ! . . . Is there
not,

O brothers, in the sea retreat—
Caught back, rolling from our feet,
Not in waves, as under tide,
But withdrawn on every side ?

Very solemn is this floor !
We can see the waves no more.
Let us follow them athwart
Sea-deeps with no waters fraught ;
Let us wipe our tears away,
Let us take this holy way !
Large the floor and larger still :
Must the whole horizon fill
With a land of weed and shell,
Where no billows native dwell
Any more—we know not why :
Any more, since we made cry ? ”

As the sunset clears the sky,
Yet across its wondrous space
There is one transcendent place
Where the sun is laid to rest :
So these mourners, strangely blessed—
Over sand and coral clean
And unbroken shells, serene,
With the peace where sea hath been,
Over panting sea-stars bright,
Silver-raying fishes, mad
For the livesome brine they had—
Come upon a Temple-grot,
Set before them in a spot
Of the naked desert, left
By the ocean’s woof and weft
Of the tidal streams withdrawn.

There upon the sand, forlorn
In its beauty, far remote,

Stands a Temple-shrine, they note
Of the Holy Spirit's dream. . . .
And they cross a little stream,
Thrilling with the far-off sea ;
And they follow what must be,
As they tread within the shrine,
Builded marble for a sign
Angels had been set to build
On a ground the ocean filled.
In a tabernacle lies,
Lone and grand to seeking eyes,
Not the sunk sun, but a tomb,
Whitest marble, and the room
Of the holy Clement dead.
There he lies, how comforted !
Through the mighty water brought
To a peace, a harbour wrought
Of the holy Angels' care.
Close his anchor ! He so still
And sufficed—the waves that kill
Driven away by angel-hands ;
While his people's exile bands
Kneel around him in the sea. . . .
Come to port, his anchor by !
Thus the sun each day must die :
Thus sweet Clement but one day
In the sea sank down, and lay
As at sunset, full of peace.

They bear him to the land : and the flood-tides
increase.

“COMMUNICANTES ET MEMORIAM
VENERANTES . . . JOANNIS ET
PAULI”

TWO olive-branches—silver ; two candelabra,—
gold :

Precious as only tried and precious things
Are of their essence bold,
The Roman John and Paul—young heads
together—

Pray on, nor is there any question whether
The image that the Emperor's Præfect brings
For worship will be worshipped, for already
The service of their ritual is so steady
It is as day moving to noon, and moving to
night's fold.

In one white, empty chamber two brethren, yet as
one,

And as a sepulchre their home made bare.
Ye ask what they have done ?

And the poor answer, “These would have no
treasure

Save this, that they can die.” O solemn pleasure
To see their home a casket everywhere

Wrought for their hour of death ! Gone the
slow mornings

Through which they wearied out the Emperor's
warnings !

Now they would hold their jewel safe in their
white walls, with prayer.

The silence ! One can listen how the gold
morning sun
Sings through the air, the hush is grown so fine.
Steps !—Thus intrusive run
Rain-storms on solitudes—A white-flashed
gleaming !
The brow of Jove, the cloud-white hair, the
beaming
Cloud-swirl of beard ! A voice that bids, “Incline,
And offer homage !” . . . How the silence
tingles !
The sun with air in call and echo mingles :
Those brethren of closed senses—peace ! they
have made no sign.

They had not sought to gather, even for the sick
and poor,
The lilies of their garden—head by head,
The older with the newer—
Nor violet-roots from Pæstum, the weaved roses.
And now the garden of their home uncloses
To cover into secrecy the dead :
Deep hidden by the roses they had watered,
Lying together sanctified and slaughtered,
Their blood upon them underground, above the
rose-leaves spread.

•
Lured, as the demons wander, demons sore afraid,
Unclean, tormented, and that do not cease
Their rending cries for aid,

The son of him who slew the saints, by daytime
Wandering, by night, that garden in the Maytime,
 Is cured of his distraction and at peace :
Then glad Terentius, coming to the garden,
Of which his well-belovèd is the warden,
Plucketh a reed to glorify the martyrs he hath
made.

IN MONTE FANNO

SYLVESTER by an open tomb
Beheld Time's vanity and doom—
A lovely body, as a flower,
Left by a ploughman's foot, wet in a shower.

Sylvester meditated, thought
His days to solitude were brought.
Sight of a corpse within its grave ! . . .
To be an eremite alone were brave.

Sylvester is a monk : and men
Grow frequent round his holy den :
Thence to a mount he leads them out,
Called *Fannus* . . . through the wood they hear
a shout.

Sylvester builds his cloister.—Hush !
Across the doorstep comes a rush,
And all the monks faint with a lure
That those in burgeoning woods lost deep endure.

Sylvester calls into the dark—
There is a breath of those that hark—
“ Peace, peace ! I am Sylvester ! Peace ! ”
Trespass and echoes and sweet motions cease.

Sylvester in the woods, as still
Even as the grave that bowed his will,
When he became at first a monk,
Rules every power in oak and olive-trunk.

Sylvester conquers by his name :
King Fannus and all Fauns lie tame
Beneath it, and the wild-wood Cross,
That he hath planted deep into the moss.

Sylvester and his monks are clear
From any advent warm and drear
Through any door : but sometimes he
Looks with slant eyes through piles of leafery.

MACRINUS AGAINST TREES

“ HOW bare ! How all the lion-desert lies
Before your cell !

Behind, are leaves and boughs on which your eyes
Could, as the eyes of shepherd, on his flock,
That turn to the soft mass from barren rock,
Familiarly dwell.”

“ O Traveller, for me the empty sands
Burning to white !

There nothing on the wilderness withstands
The soul or prayer. I would not look on trees ;
My thoughts and will were shaken in their breeze,
And buried as by night.

“ Yea, listen ! If you build a cell, at last,
Turned to the wood,
Your fall is near, your safety over-past ;
And if you plant a tree beside your door
Your fall is there beside it, and no more
The solitude is frank and good.

“ For trees must have soft dampness for their
growth,
And interfold
Their boughs and leaves into a screen, not loath
To hide soft, tempting creatures at their play,
That, playing timbrels and bright shawms, delay,
And wear one’s spirit old.

“ Smoothly such numberless distractions come—
 Impertinence
Of multiplicity, salute and hum.
Away with solitude of leafy shade,
Mustering coy birds and beasts, and men waylaid,
 Tingling each hooded sense !

“ Did not God call out of a covert-wood
 Adam and Eve,
Where, cowering under earliest sin, they stood,
The hugged green-leaves in bunches round their
 den ?
Himself God called them out—so lost are men
 Whom forest-haunts receive ! ”

PASCHAL'S MASS

THE sheep still in dew, but the sky
In sun, the far river in sun ;
And the incense of flowers steeped bright—
 Their smell as sweet light ;
And the shepherd-boy tethered on high
To his flock and his day's work begun.

The bees in the wind of the dawn ;
The larks not yet climbing aloft
 As high as the Aragon Hills . . .
What bell-ringing thrills
Through the bell-wether's pastoral lorn ?
From the valley a bell clear and soft.

The shepherd-boy kneeling in dew ;
The bell of his wether rung sharp ;
Below him the tinkle and sway,
 From far, far away,
Of the sacring-bell, clear as a harp
In its chime of God lifted anew.

For his God, in the vale, on the height
He weeps ; while the morning-larks rise.
 Lo, in chasuble, living and rich
 Golden rays cross-stitch,
Foreshown by magnificent light—
Lo, an angel grows firm on his eyes !

As an altar of marvellous stone
Before him the mountain hath blazed,
Round the angel, who lifts in the air

A Sun that is there :
To the sheep and the shepherd-boy shown,
With the ringing of larks, God is raised.

O Angel-priest, fragrant with thyme,
Girt with sixfold glorious wings !

O sky of the mountains above
Adventurous Love !
How through air and the larks' watchful chime
Earth her incense, as thurifer, flings !

O Sacrament, shown to a boy,
More blest than the Shepherds of old,
He is thine for his lifetime, cast

On his mountain vast,
In his joy, his great freshness of joy
From that high, singing daylight of gold !

A SNOW-CAVE

SUDDENLY the snow is falling fast :
Slow the lovely speed,
All the air being full with fulness cast
On the mounded world . . .
And the firmamental snow will give no heed,
Nor the snow terrestrial have a care
For anything its heavy deluge hides,
For anything upcurled
In its mountain-hug, nor what abides
Imprisoned deep of the imprisoning air.

Peter of Alcantara, how wide
And untrodden quite
Swells the sudden snow on every side,
Speckled with no sign,
One in uncontrollable and fearful white !

Swiftly, as it came, its mood is changed . . .
Now it drifts a white flame of caress,
As if it took design,
Learnt a new art of its loveliness,
And in a cave above the Saint is ranged.

Hour on hour the world is flooded bright
With fair agency,
In continuance a sleep, of might
To lay death athwart
Any bosom, any limbs that cannot flee :

et safely housed the holy traveller waits,
Though in that white storm caught ;
For the deep snow of earth its snow abates
Before a force of deeper chastity.

Little flakes, that touch with feet like birds,
Touch him not at all,
But lie convex in a wave that curds,
Bowed upon its vault,
Stooping on him almost won to fall,
Yet in strength withheld, whole in its love,
As a virgin praying for a priest :
So in its lovely halt,
So aloof from sense, it rears above
The saint its covert, not a flake released.

PROPHET

BLESSED with joy, as daybreak under cloud—
Tender light of youth in the old face—
Blessed with joy beneath the weight and shroud
Of the years before this day of Grace,
Simeon blesses God and praises Him,
As a little child and mother slim

With first girlhood come their way
Toward his face, and night becometh day.

Prophet, joy for thee and for thy land !
Wide the welcome and the peace of joy !
But he takes the infant on his hand,
Graciously receives the milking boy
From the mother's bosom, from her heart,

While she stands in reverence apart.

Lo, the old man's countenance,
In a wave of anguish breaks from trance !

All the features lift with power, and sink,
As if sudden earthquake heaved and rolled
Through them, from a sudden thought they think.
Can a child of but a few weeks old
So confuse with terror an old man ?
Yea, this child, laid on his fingers' span,

Is for the ruin or the rise
Of the generations, Simeon cries.

Yea, a child, a tender handful, sleek
As a pearl—and the dire earthquake's power
In his little body set, to wreak

Dread requital on the souls that cower
Mad with desolation, naked, lost,
Or uplifted wild from a dead host :

For the rise and ruin set
Of so many—but not yet, not yet !

Shattered by the Child, the Prophet turns
To the slender Mother, bright and bowed.
Woe again ! A flawless lightning burns
Through his eyes and his weak voice rings loud,
How a sword shall pierce her heart alone
That out of many hearts their thoughts be shown.

Simeon, terror masks all joy
In this Mother and her milking Boy !

LOOKING UPON JESUS AS HE WALKED

WHAT is it thou hast seen,
O desert prophet, hung with camel's hair, and
lean ?

What makes thine eyes so wide ?
Not the huge desert where the camel-owners
ride ;

But One, who comes along,
So humble in His steps, and yet to Him belong
Thy days in their surcease,
Because He must increase as thou must now
decrease.

Behold thy God, whose strength
Is as the coiling-in of thy life's length !

Thou of wide eyes, wide soul,
Thy heart-blood as He comes to thee heaves on
its goal !

Saint of the sinner, John,
Those whom thy lustral water hath been poured
upon,

Those who have kept thy fast
With locusts and wild honey and long hours have
passed

In penance, when they see
Christ coming toward them, young and fair with
what shall be,

And giving God delight,
They know, by very doom of that remorseless
sight,

That they, as they have been,
Will fade away, diminish and no more be seen :
They must, O desert saint,
Bow them to certain death and yet they must not
faint,
And yet they must proclaim
The obliterating flourish of their Slayer's name.

A DANCE OF DEATH

HOW lovely is a silver winter-day
Of sturdy ice,
That clogs the hidden river's tiniest bay
With diamond-stone of price
To make an empress cast her dazzling stones
Upon its light as hail—
So little its effulgence condones
Her diamonds' denser trail
Of radiance on the air !
How strange this ice, so motionless and still,
Yet calling as with music to our feet,
So that they chafe and dare
Their swiftest motion to repeat
These harmonies of challenge, sounds that fill
The floor of ice, as the crystalline sphere
Around the heavens is filled with such a song
That, when they hear,
The stars, each in their heaven, are drawn along !

Oh, see, a dancer ! One whose feet
Move on unshod with steel !
She is not skating fleet
On toe and heel,
But only tip-toe dances in a whirl,
A lovely dancing-girl,
Upon the frozen surface of the stream.
Without a wonder, it would seem,
She could not keep her sway,
The balance of her limbs

Sure on the musical, iced river-way
That, sparkling, dims
Her trinkets as they swing, so high its sparks
Tinkle the sun and scatter song like larks.

She dances mid the sumptuous whiteness set
Of winter's sunniest noon ;
She dances as the sun-rays that forget
In winter sunset falleth soon
To sheer sunset :
She dances with a languor through the frost
As she had never lost,
In lands where there is snow,
The Orient's immeasurable glow.

Who is this dancer white—
A creature slight,
Weaving the East upon a stream of ice,
That in a trice
Might trip the dance and fling the dancer down ?
Does she not know deeps under ice can drown ?

This is Salome, in a western land,
An exile with Herodias, her mother,
With Herod and Herodias :
And she has sought the river's icy mass,
Companioned by no other,
To dance upon the ice—each hand
Held, as a snow-bird's wings,
In heavy poise.

Ecstatic, with no noise,

Athwart the ice her dream, her spell she flings ;
And Winter in a rapture of delight
Flings up and down the spangles of her light.

Oh, hearken, hearken ! . . . Ice and frost,
From these cajoling motions freed,

Have straight given heed
To Will more firm. In their obedience

Their masses dense
Are riven as by a sword. . . .

Where is the Vision by the snow adored ?

The Vision is no more
Seen from the noontide shore.

Oh, fearful crash of thunder from the stream,
As there were thunder-clouds upon its wave !

Could nothing save
The dancer in the noontide beam ?

She is engulphed and all the dance is done.

Bright leaps the noontide sun—
But stay, what leaps beneath it ? A gold head,
That twinkles with its jewels bright

As water-drops. . . .
O murdered Baptist of the severed head,
Her head was caught and girded tight,
And severed by the ice-brook sword, and sped

In dance that never stops.

It skims and hops
Across the ice that rasped it. Smooth and gay,

And void of care,

It takes its sunny way :
But underneath the golden hair,

And underneath those jewel-sparks,
Keen noontide marks
A little face as grey as evening ice ;
Lips, open in a scream no soul may hear
Eyes fixed as they beheld the silver plate
That they at Macherontis once beheld ;
While the hair trails, although so fleet and nice
The motion of the head as subjugate
To its own law : yet in the face what fear,
To what excess compelled !

Salome's head is dancing on the bright
And silver ice. O holy John, how still
Was laid thy head upon the salver white,
When thou hadst done God's Will !

OBEDIENCE

O INSTRUMENT of God, baptizing men
In vehement, lone Jordan of the wilds,
Amid the rushes, when
Thou wert startled by the sight
Of One coming, simply bright
As a Lamb, across the sand,
Thou didst tremble to abide
In the shallows and to dash the tide
Of the current on a Head
That must bow beneath the sin of men !
Thou wouldest only, at command,
Keep thy awful station, grown more awful then.

But thou wert obedient to His word,
Who was greater beyond words than thou,
As thy lips averred :
And, obedient, thou wert blest
With the presence manifest
Of the Holy Trinity—
Thou the Body of the Son
Didst behold on which thy rite was done ;
Thou didst hear the Father's Voice,
As the firmament soft thunder heard ;
And thy senses, blest to hear and see,
Might behold the Spirit poised, a sunlit Bird.

GARDENS ENCLOSED

GARDEN by the brook,
The brook Kedron—
Olive-silvered nook,
Red flowers to kneel on :
There in blood and strife divine,
There a Eucharist outspread,
Christ gave the Father in a chalice Wine,
And in His yielded Will He offered Bread.

Garden on the hill,
Mount Golgotha,
Have you a running rill
From your rocky spur ?
“ Yea, a water from His side,
Who was hanging on a Tree :
Son of Man, they called Him, and He died,
And is hidden in my rock with me.”

GARDEN-SEED

WHAT art Thou sowing in the garden-ground,

Sowing, sowing with such pain ?

Clouds are overhead, and all around

Spring hath fallen spring-rain

Of seed-growing power.

Lo, where Thou bowest down, it seems a shower

Hath laid the grass, as rain ran through,

Engendering rain, stronger than early dew.

It is Thy Agony that pierces deep

Through the sod of that still place ;

For Thou bowest down where Thou dost weep,

Bowest down Thy face ;

And Thou sowest seed,

Drops of Thy most Holy Blood, that bleed

Through brow and limbs in sweat, and stay

Red on the Earth, while the tears sink away.

Sower, what herb shall spring, what flower be
born ?

Will pomegranate-apples hang,

When we pass this way, some morn ?

Struck with spring's own pang,

This our eyes will see—

Faith that shoulders great buds lustily ;

Hope that shoots up a hundredfold ;

And Love in roses wondrous to behold.

UNIVERSA COHORS

THEY call the cohort from all sides together. . . .

There is a king, a king of mockery,
His kingdom a pretence,
An actor to be dressed for all to see,
Whose body oozes from the cords or leather
That struck with lashes dense—

There is a king to mock, a make-believe
To be derided, a poor form to grieve
With haughty purple of the robe of state,
And acclamations powerless to elate ;
A victim to be tortured and made grand
With clothes whose pomp He cannot understand,
Claiming with slavish brow their heritage :
There is the mocking of a solemn dupe,
With laughter and a jollity of rage.

They call together, like the vultures called
To feast on what is yet a feast forestalled,
The cohort in a troop.

O Martyrs, press together from all regions,
You have a King, a King for whom you died—
His kingdom built on gems—
And ye are dressed in purple from His side ;
The stoles of glory, clothing all your legion,
His purple to their hems !
Press round Him whom the Romans mocked
that day,
Press round Him, Martyrs ; keep His foes at
bay !

And let me, though far off from your bright
red
Of vestures triumphing in Blood He shed,
Yet wrap my heart in His deep sanguine robe,
Ensanguined from the scourge, and nails that
probe,
And spear that cleaves ! Wrapt in His Blood,
O heart,
We must bear witness that His purple dress
Is not the dressing of an actor's part,
But of a Royalty no woof of man
Might clothe that Day of Woe, nor ever can—
That is the Martyr's dress.

IN EXTREMIS

WHAT is the desert? Thirst,
And very immolation's loneliness!
Upon that land of death dry ridges press,
Like to sand-drifts on the tongue—
And the sequestered heart through fear will
burst.

Armies have gone along,
Defeated, to oblivion among
The naught of those bare sands—
Banners and horses and bright-harnessed
bands.
None hath beheld the banners wave and slip
Abyssward, and the horses, under whip
Of crazy dust, plunge down
With manes sand-tossed,
Beneath the plain they crossed,
Making athwart the breadth a little frown,
Gone in its very moment, like the smile
That followed, as the horsemen flashed awhile
Above the grave, and sank bright, and were
gone.

O desert, full of plots,
On lapping water, of sleek palm-tree knots,
And isles in haunted channels; cruel earth,
Mirage of desolation, grace of dearth,
Many have died in anguish at the pain
Never to drink those lakes that gibe and wane!

“ I thirst ”—“ My God, Thou hast forsaken Me ! ”
Parched, sinking in abysses mortally,
O Christ, and there is none to succour Thee,
Water of Life, perpetual Deity !

A LIGNO

THERE were trees that spring—
One on a little hill,
One in a small, green field.
One stood a leaf-stripped thing ;
One had begun to fill
With leaves from shoots unsealed,
With purple flowers along the wood—
So those trees stood.

One bore up a Form
On the clean branches nailed,
Ineffable in peace :
One bent as if a storm
In its descent had trailed
Down the red blossom-fleece ;
And where the boughs most sullen hung
A crisped form swung.

One the Tree of Life—
Both near Jerusalem—
And one of Death the Tree !
One bore a bitter strife ;
A cry came from its stem :
“Thou hast forsaken Me !”
The other heard no sound at all,
Save a dumb fall.

Both were gibbet-trees—
From one was said, “Forgive !

They know not what they do."

One rocked in purple breeze

Despair, that would not live,

Nor trust forgiveness :—no !

And from the wreathèd branches fell

A soul to Hell.

ONE REED

SHAKEN by winds to sigh, to song,
One reed amid the misty throng
That to a reed-bed, Christ, belong—
 One reed among
Those who are reeds to every wind,
Now in Thy Presence, now declined :

Cut me away from dim caprice,
And sheer me from the reedy fleece !
Let my poor, shivering motion cease,
 Dead of Thy peace :
A reed and no more shaken—yea,
No more a slant sedge-reed I pray !

No more ! But, Mercy infinite,
Let me not be a reed to smite
The thorns within Thy forehead tight,
 And urge to sight
Thy sacred Blood and urge Thy pain !
Better the devious winds again !

Upon Thy lips let me but lay
Such sour, dun vintage as I may ;
Push not the sponge-tipped spear away,
 But let it stay !
Oh, let the bitter draught through me
Bring to Thy Cross some lenity !

CRYING OUT

IN the Orient heat He stands—
Heat that makes the palm-trees dim,
Palms that do not shelter Him,
As under the fierce blue He stands with out-stretched hands.

As a lizard of the rocks,
Under furnace-sun He stays ;
Earth beneath Him in a daze
Is faint and trembling, spite of rocks, in shadeless
blocks.

He among them mid the blue,
With a mouth wide open held,
As a lion-fountain welled
Under the spaciousness of blue, the heat throbs
through.

Wide His mouth as lion's, set
Wide for waters of a fount !
Through them words of challenge mount,
Great words that cry through them, wide-set,
where men have met.

“ Ye the thirsty come to Me ! ”
So He cries with lion-roar :
“ Ye will thirst not any more.
Come ! ” and He stands for all to see, and offers
free.

Jesus, in the Eastern sun,
A strange prophet with His cry !
While the folk are passing by,
And clack their tongues, nor will they run where
thirst is done.

AD MORTEM

THIS sin is unto death. Whose death ? Fair
tomb

Of virgin rock, not for my corse such room !

Where never man hath lain

Shall I by sin attain—

Among the unpolluted crystals lie

In my malignity ?

For I have killed my God, and I behold

His burial, behold His Body rolled

In a new sheet with nard,

And in the grotto hard

Lying as hard—O tenderest Love !—as block

Of that new-cloven rock.

As a vile, wandering spectre I must stray,

Now I have quenched the Light, that was my

Day,

By wickedness, almost

Against the Holy Ghost,

Laying within His tomb God, laying Him

Wound tight in face and limb.

I cannot see ! My eyes are wells that beat

Fountains of tears forth on my hands and feet :

With fire of pain I cry,

That angels of the sky

Come forth. . . . “ My God, arise and live once
more !

My sin I will abhor !

“ Divine One, be not dead and put away !
O Holy Ghost, blow down the stone, I pray,
 Though it should crush me there
 Outspread, the worst I dare.
Divine One, mid the tombs, with pardoning grace
 Unwrap Thy limbs, Thy face !

“ Austere come forth upon me as grey dawn !
Well it had been that I had not been born,
 Who could Thy burial see ! . . .
 What will become of me,
Unless Thou wilt arise and bid me live,
 Unless Thou wilt forgive ?”

But there is Easter every day and hour
When by the crevice of Thy tomb we cower,
 Ghosts from dank night, and call,
 And wait for one footfall
Of the arising, awful Love we doomed
 Ourselves to lie entombed.

THE FLOWER FADETH

THE Lord died yesterday :—
Lowly and single, lost,
His worn disciples, tossed
With pain of tears, have wandered wide
In the country-fields, as sheep might stray.

No need to hide,
For harvesters that shout and sing have heard
Of the far city's rumour scarce a word,
And only stare to see a stranger lost.

Tears fight with Peter's breath—

He roves a field of grass,
At eventide . . . a mass
Of faded flower of grass, grown grey,
Cut from sap and clinging into death,
And bowed one way.

Alone amid the darkness soon to be
Deep midnight, Peter mourneth bitterly
Christ buried, the sunk day, the flower of grass.

Yet he had hailed Him Christ. . . .

The straw and clover feel
Sudden a lifted heel,
And, rudely whirled aside, are left
By the stranger's feet, they had enticed
Beneath their weft.

But he is on the rock, the narrow way,
As if he talked with something he would say,
As if he would conceive as he could feel.

He stands thus in sweet dark,
The hay upon the air,
His feet on bare rock bare,
Set as a statue's, waiting on. . . .
Is it a trumpet raised and sounded ? Hark,
Hath a torch shone ?
The cock crows and the sun appears ! Yet dry
Is Peter's face, although the dawn-bird cry,
As the first Easter Day assumes the air.

FEAR NOT

A LITTLE chamber, shadowed, still
As cave within a marble hill—
O Virgin Mother, thou dost fill
The little space, bent down in prayer !
Sudden, through tears, thou art aware
How One is standing at thy door,
As stood, some thirty years before,
The Angel when thy fear was sore.

O Virgin—Virgin-Mother now,
No creature half so still as thou,
With the black wimple round thy brow,
For He hath entered : very white
His body, lovely as first light.
Thou tremblest . . . Mother, thou dost hear
An *Ave* stealing through thy fear,
As He who entered draweth near !

“ Jesus ? ”—She quickly hid in dread
The name that through her being spread
Its lustre, for her Son was dead. . . .
And yet her arms rise up, her eyes
Raised as at morning sacrifice :
For blessed is she in this dower
Beyond the Holy Ghost’s, that hour
When He encompassed her in power.

RECOGNITION

BREATH from the water, breath down from the moon,

A trembling influence between, so mild,
The water-hen makes tempest if she croon,
And fishers from the ship look forth beguiled :
They look on, careless of the reeds aswim,
And know not why they watch the shoreway dim ;

Why watch the single form that moves along,
So dark in nobleness of solitude,
By the lake-side, and gathers from among
The rushes fallen rush as fuel rude.

One from the ship bows forwards in the night. . . .
What makes that fisher's face so gaily white ?

A voice comes to them : “ Children, have ye caught
All the night nothing ? ” And the voice entreats :
“ Stretch forth your nets ! ”—Behold, the nets are
fraught,

Once dipped, with fish, a silver dance, that beats
Against the trellis. . . . And John's face shines now
As Lucifer, the Dawn-star, from the prow.

In Peter's ear “ It is the Lord ” he saith—
Virgin, he knows the Virgin Deity :
Then on the secret holding back his breath,
While Peter girds his clothes on boisterously
To spring out overboard, John doth abide
With his own smile, and steers to the Loved Side.

VENIT JESUS
(IN THE CONFESSORIAL)

“PEACE be to you !”—The door is closed.
“Peace be to you !”—Only His Wounds lie wide,
 His Wounds in hands, and side,
 And feet, His Wounds exposed.
 And I rejoice
At His still hands and at the voice
Of the Wounds calling through twilight ;
For here the day is almost night,
In its severe and curtained dark. . . .
 But I rejoice to hark
What on His priest He whispers low,
Breathing the breath of power through day’s eclipse,
 A sigh on all the place
As of creation on the waters’ face :
“Receive the Holy Spirit ! All the sins
 You shall remit, remitted are,
And those you shall retain, they are retained.”
Listen ! The empery this chamber wins !
A Law moves here as peaceful as a star
Moves on the circle of its sway ordained.
Here let me kneel, and every struggle cease !
Here the dark Wounds bleed over me in peace :
Here God hath come to bless me at nightfall,
With words of consolation that appal,
For I had left Him, as the gathered few
Of His disciples He passed, darkling, through :
And yet He came to them as comes a dew. . . .
O bounty of such stillness !—“Peace to you !”

ASCENSION

FINE, jealous, in suspicion as a child,
In jealousy more infinitely wild,
Forth to us from Thy Father Thou didst come :

Now to Thy Father in His home
Ascend—to the Beginning and the Dawn !

Pass to the East,
New-born our priest—
The East,
And where the rose is born !

O Heaven of Heavens, as no sea is clear,
O Eastern Gate of Waters, with a spear
Day rings you wide for Christ to be released !

He passes free from Earth, our priest
Forth to His Shrine : our love, grown tense,
Would follow Him,
Through Seraphim
Lost dim,
His servers who incense.

CONFLUENCE

*Genitori genitoque
Laus et jubilatio.*

ONE—from the limits of the sky, whence rain
 And sun and dew come down,
Moveth, a sheet of fire, and in His train,
 Where the flames ripple brown,
 Are spirits to be born
Into the Earth, dim creatures slender,
Girt in the train of Him whose brows are tender,
Compulsive, sweet as in the strength of morn.

One—from the deepness of the Earth, where graves
 Have fallen on gems in rock,
Moveth, a sheet of fire, whose ruddy waves
 Have gathered up a flock
 Of people on all sides,
Redeemed from Earth by that red flowing
Behind a Form, as if from sunset glowing
Above the wheat, when harvest-home betides.

IMPLE SUPERNA GRATIA

WE may enter far into a rose,
Parting it, but the bee deeper still :
With our eyes we may even penetrate
To a ruby and our vision fill ;
Though a beam of sunlight deeper knows
How the ruby's heart-rays congregate.

Give me finer potency of gift !
For Thy Holy Wounds I would attain,
As a bee the feeding loveliness
Of the sanguine roses. I would lift
Flashes of such faith that I may drain
From each Gem the wells of Blood that press !

WORDS OF THE BRIDEGROOM

YE who would follow Me with song,
My heavenly bodyguard, My throng
Of happy throats, with voices free
As birds in deep-wood secrecy ;
Ye who would be the core of Heaven round Me,
And therefore songsters of felicity
Beyond all ranges of the singing
That myriad voices of the Blessed are flinging
In skylark madness to Me distantly ;
My Virgins, My delight and neighbourhood,
The white flowers of My Precious Blood,
Through whom it rises up and yields
Fragrance to Me of lily-fields ;
How shall ye keep the whiteness of your vow ?
My Virgins, My white Brides, I whisper how :
Of Virgin flesh, a Virgin God,
Incarnate among men I trod ;
And when as Bread they feed on Me
Needs must that Bread be of Virginity.
Feed at My altar, My white Doves,
Feed on the Bread My Mother loves !

A MAGIC MIRROR

THOU art in the early youth
Of Thy mission, Thou the Truth :
Thy young eyes behold the glory
Of the lilies' burnished story
That the lovely dress they don
Vaunts it over Solomon.
Fields of lilies and of corn
Thou dost tarry through at dawn,
Seeing in their life a spell,
Drawing it as grace to dwell
In Thy first disciples' eyes.
We of far-off centuries
See Thee on the cornfields' sod,
Mid the lily-heads, a God
Young and dumb as yet of grief.
Lo, although the time is brief,
All the heavenly things, Thou must
Suffer, because Love is just
To a perfect building's measure,
Thou hast buried under pleasure
Of Thy heart incarnate mid
Youths Thou call'st and forces hid
With fresh flowers and stems of gold.
Yet Thy vision, waxing bold
Through the Truth, amid the light
Of this world's green, gold and white,
Sees a desert stretch away,
Stretched on its upheavals gray,
Round a serpent lifted high

In untarnishable sky.
Thou dost see that serpent high
In untarnishable sky :
And with ruddy lips dost say
How the Son of Man one day
Must be lifted for Love's sake.
Thy bright eyes, so clear awake,
See Thy Body lifted high
As a serpent's in the sky.
Day by day Thou see'st Thy Cross—
Yet the cornfields are not dross ;
Nor the lilies, kinglike clad,
Grave-clothes of a weaving sad.
Life for lily-flowers too fair—
No sustaining corn may share—
Thou dost hail for those who gaze
On the serpent's lifted maze.
Feeder among Lilies, Bread
To Thy multitudes outspread,
Let me love Thy pasture, all
Bliss that round my life may fall,
Though my eyes and voice, as Thine,
Witness the raised serpent's twine.

DESCENT FROM THE CROSS

COME down from the Cross, my soul, and save
thyself—come down !
Thou wilt be free as wind. None meeting thee
will know
How thou wert hanging stark, my soul, outside
the town.
Thou wilt fare to and fro ;
Thy feet in grass will smell of faithful thyme ; thy
head . . .
Think of the thorns, my soul—how thou wilt cast
them off,
With shudder at the bleeding clench they hold !
But on their wounds thou wilt a balsam spread,
And over that a verdurous circle rolled
With gathered violets, sweet bright violets, sweet
As incense of the thyme on thy free feet ;
A wreath thou wilt not give away, nor wilt thou
doff.

Come down from the Cross, my soul, and save
thyself ; yea, move
As scudding swans pass lithely on a seaward
stream !
Thou wilt have everything thou wert made great
to love ;
Thou wilt have ease for every dream ;
No nails with fang will hold thy purpose to one
aim ;

There will be arbours round about thee, not one trunk
Against thy shoulders pressed and burning them with hate,
Yea, burning with intolerable flame.
O lips, such noxious vinegar have drunk,
There are through valley-woods and mountain-glades
Rivers where thirst in naked prowess wades ;
And there are wells in solitude whose chill no hour abates !

Come down from the Cross, my soul, and save thyself ! A sign
Thou wilt become to many, as a shooting star.
They will believe thou art æthereal, divine,
When thou art where they are ;
They will believe in thee and give thee feasts and praise.
They will believe thy power when thou hast loosed thy nails ;
For power to them is fetterless and grand :
For destiny to them, along their ways,
Is one whose Earthly Kingdom never fails.
Thou wilt be as a prophet or a king
In thy tremendous term of flourishing—
And thy hot royalty with acclamations fanned.

Come down from the Cross, my soul, and save thyself ! . . . Beware !

Art thou not crucified with God, who is thy breath ?
Wilt thou not hang as He while mockers laugh and stare ?
Wilt thou not die His death ?
Wilt thou not stay as He with nails and thorns and thirst ?
Wilt thou not choose to conquer faith in His lone style ?
Wilt thou not be with Him and hold thee still ?
Voices have cried to Him, *Come down !* Accursed And vain those voices, striving to beguile !
How heedless, solemn-gray in powerful mass,
Christ droops among the echoes as they pass !
O soul, remain with Him, with Him thy doom fulfil !

UNSURPASSED

LORD JESUS, Thou didst come to us, to man,
From Godhead's open golden Halls,
From Godhead's hidden Throne
Of glory, no imagination can
Achieve, and it must glow alone,
Behind a cloud that falls

Over the Triune Perfectness its voice
Of thunder, making Cherubim rejoice,
And Seraphim as doves in rapture moan.

Yet Thou didst come to us a wailing child,
Homeless, tied up in swaddling-clothes,
To live in poverty
And by the road : then, with detractions piled,
And infamies of misery
From scourge and thorns and blows,
To die a felon fastened into wood
By nails that in their jeering harshness could
Clamp vermin of the forests to a tree.

And Thou dost come to us from Heaven each day,
Obeying words that call Thee down
On mortal lips ; and Thou,
Jesus, dost suffer mortal power to slay
Its God in sacrifice : dost bow
Thy bright Supremacy to lose its Crown,
Closed in a prison, yet through Godhead free
To every insult, gibe and contumely—
Come from Forever to be with us Now.

So Thou dost come to us. But when at last
Thou callest us to come to Thee,
We only have to die,
Only from weary bones our flesh to cast,
Only to give a bitter cry ;
Yea, but a little while to see
Our beauty falling from us, in its fall
Destined to lose its suasions that enthral,
Destined to be as any gem put by.

We but fulfil our stricken Nature's law
To fail and to consume and end ;
While Thou dost come and break,
Coming to us, Thy Nature with a flaw
Of death and for our mortal sake
Thou dost Thy awful wholeness rend.
Oh, let me run to Thee, as runs a wind,
That leaves the withered trees, it moved, behind,
And triumphs forward, careless of its wake !

WASTING

I NEED Thee, O my Food,
O Christ, for whom I pine fourteen long days—
And, as the time delays,
More sad my mood,
More faint my powers ;
Like that poor Beast of fairy-tale,
Who by the fountain cowers,
Reft of his Beauty, his poor love's avail,
By whom he lives, and, missing, dies
By inches, at the fountain, with wan eyes !

O come, my Beauty, come,
My Lord, by whom I flourish and am strong ;
If I must wait so long,
And mourn so dumb,
Reach me in time,
Before I shudder into death and die !
Bow down sublime,
O Beautiful in pity, where I lie,
And rouse me, sovereign, from my woe,
Empowering me with Thy celestial glow !

THE HOUR OF NEED

O MOTHER of my Lord,
Beautiful Mary, aid !
He, whom thy will adored,
When thy body was afraid,
Is coming in my flesh to dwell—
Pray for me, Mary . . . and white Gabriel !

To thee He came a child,
To me He comes as wheat :
And He descended mild
To His Mother, as was meet.
To me He comes where sin hath been . . .
Gabriel, sweep thy lily-stem between !

He came, O Mary, down
To bless thy virgin womb :
From me He sweeps God's frown,
And He lifts me from a tomb.
Thou wert afraid. . . . Have grace toward me !
Help me, O Mary ! Gabriel, hearten me !

Great love it was to give
His Body to thy care,
In thine awhile to live :
For me this love He will dare. . . .
Pray, Mary, pray ! My soul is shent !
Thy wings, thy wings, O Gabriel, for my tent !

EXTREME UNCTION

SOFT fall the Holy Oils, their drip
Peaceful as Jesus sleeping on the ship.
Our eyes, so restless and so full of grip,
 Reflecting as the sea,
Give up their range and their possession, free
As if to sleep—the sleep of Deity.

Upon the ears a lull that dowers
With gentleness of bees in laurel-flowers ;
So that it gives to Quiet breeding powers,
 A future wrought of gold,
When we shall hear what never hath been told,
And fathom sound it takes all heaven to hold.

Oh, softness on the nostrils, where they strained
After their airy lusts till they attained ;
Now, by the Cross of balm so softly reined,
 They wait to breathe for breath
The vigour of their God, as a shell saith,
Left on the beach, “The brine will wake my
death.”

The lips receive no coal of fire
To urge their fervent crying should not tire ;
A tender Cross gives check to such desire,
 And bids them wait their song,
Till they are far from peril and among
The consonant and ever-praising throng.

The hands, the feet . . . O Jesus, all
Marked with Thy Cross, but as a dream may fall
In mercy on a mind great woes appal—

A healing shade,
A priestly grace, so soft the Cross is made,
Embracing, by the nails we are not frayed.

Crosses as flowers on every sense
Fall, rest on them in heavenly suspense ;
And then we know the holy, the immense
 Delight of what shall be,
When, sanctified and calm for joyance, we
Shall have of God our bodies deathlessly.

AFTER ANOINTING

JOY of the senses, joy of all
And each of them, as fall
The Holy Oils ! . . . O senses, ye would dance,
Would circle what ye cannot see,
Nor hear, nor smell, nor taste, nor touch,
Yet ye receive of your felicity,
Till ye would reel and dance ;
The joy apparent from your bliss being such
That, in a fivefold garland knit,
Softly ye would circle it.

Joy ripples through each covered lid ;
Nor are the ears forbid
Sounds as of honeycomb, so sweet is Heaven
Afar, such sweet, such haunting sound !
O nostrils, myrtle ye shall love !
The lips taste fully, as if God were found.
Swift, under peace, toward Heaven
The hands, the feet, so still, like still lakes move.
Delighted Powers of Sense, ye dance,
Woven in such a lovely chance !

VIATICUM

O HEART, that burns within,
Illuminated, hot !
O feet, that tread the road
As if they trod it not—
So lifted and so winged
By rare companionship !
No matter tho' the road
Doth unto shadow dip ;
The meaning of the night
My ears, attentive, hail.
The mighty silence brings
Music no nightingale
Hath warbled from its fount ;
Music of holy things
Made clear as song can make,
With marvellous utterings :
The Past become a joy
Of instant clarity,
As the deep evening fills
With converse brimmingly.
O nightingale, hold back
Your wildest song's discant ;
You cannot make my heart
With such devotion pant
As He who steps along
Beside me in the shade,
Down the steep valley-road,
The enveloping, dark glade !
Hush, O dim nightingale ! . . .

Is it my God whose Feet
Wing mine to travel on ;
Whose voice in current sweet
Shows how divine the thought
And purpose is of all
That hath been and shall be,
And shall to me befall ?
Stay, nightingale ! Behold !
This Wayfarer, with strange,
Wild Voice that rouses gloom
Thy voice could never range,
Hath broken Bread with me !
No resinous, balmed shrine
Glows from its core as I,
When I behold His sign,
And touch His offering Hand.
O holiest journey, sped
With Him who died for me,
Who breaking with me Bread,
Is known to me as Life,
Is felt by me as Fire ;
Who is my Way and all
My wayfaring's Desire !

A GIFT OF SWEETNESS

I THOUGHT to lay my hands about Thy Crown,
And gather, bleeding, its sharp spines :
But as I knelt and bowed my forehead down,
Worshipping thy cruel desert-Crown,
Worshipping its thicket of sharp spines—

Through them blew a little wind,
Clearer than the dew in breath
Round Thy Mother's feet at Nazareth ;
In a cloud it left behind
Scent of violets, of such birth
They had never broken earth,
But through meshes of the Crown of Thorn,
In a fertilising cloud, were born ;
And, fresh with piety of grace,
Were thrown—oh sweet !—unseen across my face,
That never will a mould-born violet-bed
Smell like the violets from the Sacred Head.

IN CHRISTO

AS shade doth on a dial slide,
Those dark and parting eyes abide
Toward me from the tall vessel's side :
Eyes lovelier than the stones of grace
That build for God His dwelling-place ;
Beyond all jewels in device,
Yea, beyond amethyst in price,
The hyacinth-stone in loveliness.
Delectable, dear eyes that bless ;
A saviour's eyes, bent down on me,
As New Jerusalem might be
Come down, adorned with Charity. . . .
Let the tall vessel sweep to sea !

SIGHTS FOR GOD

A WOMAN, heavenly as dew
Of the fresh morning, in a little room
Is kneeling down, and through
The door of it an Angel's bloom
Of light, how lovely, hath advanced,
And on the walls his lovely light hath danced,
As he hath told God's utter Will
Unto that creature heavenly and still—
God the Father's terrible, high Will.

Motions of fear and wonder
The girl sways under ;
Her eyes distraught, as wings
A hawk's suspension brings
To panic, when two doves
Tremble mid their sweet loves.
She sees beyond sight's rim
God and the Power of Him ;
His Promise fallen on her
As grace He would confer—
Men and the fear their speech
Must startle should it reach
A virgin's secrecy. . . .
How can such terrors be ?
Then over her, distraught,
Falls a contentment wrought
To courage of a word
By the Archangel heard
With heart's felicity—
“ Be it done unto me

According to His Will."

The little room thereafter grew more still,

And Mary knelt and shone

With grace, although the Angel's beam was gone.

This was the fairest sight God yet had looked
upon—

Mary, the chosen Mother of His Son,

Obedient to Him

As glowing Seraphim.

A lonely Man, beneath the trees,

That stoop above a sward of garden-ground,

Kneels in the evening breeze,

Felt as flow without a sound.

While He kneels in that cool place,

With the moonlight settled on His face,

He is praying that He may not drink

Of a Cup filled bitter to the brink,

Praying in His anguish not to drink.

And, in strife tremendous

Of woe stupendous,

He strains with power so great—

As a red pomegranate

That splits and bleeds His head

With blood is scarlet-red.

He struggles with the might

Of the world's sin in sight,

That He must bear if now

He bends ensanguined brow,

And drinks that awful Cup

Before his eyes raised up.

Sin!—as He meets the shock,
Earth reddens to its rock
With blood. . . . Then peace from storm
Comes to that ruddy Form,
And a brave word of God
Blows over the wet sod—
“ If I must drink, not mine,
My will, O Father, thine
Be done! Not mine, Thy Will ! ”
The garden-shades thereafter grew more still,
Because an angel came,
And the red forehead whitened in his flame.
This was the fairest sight God ever looked
upon—
Jesus, His loved, only-begotten Son,
Obedient to Him
As sworded Cherubim.

TRANSIT

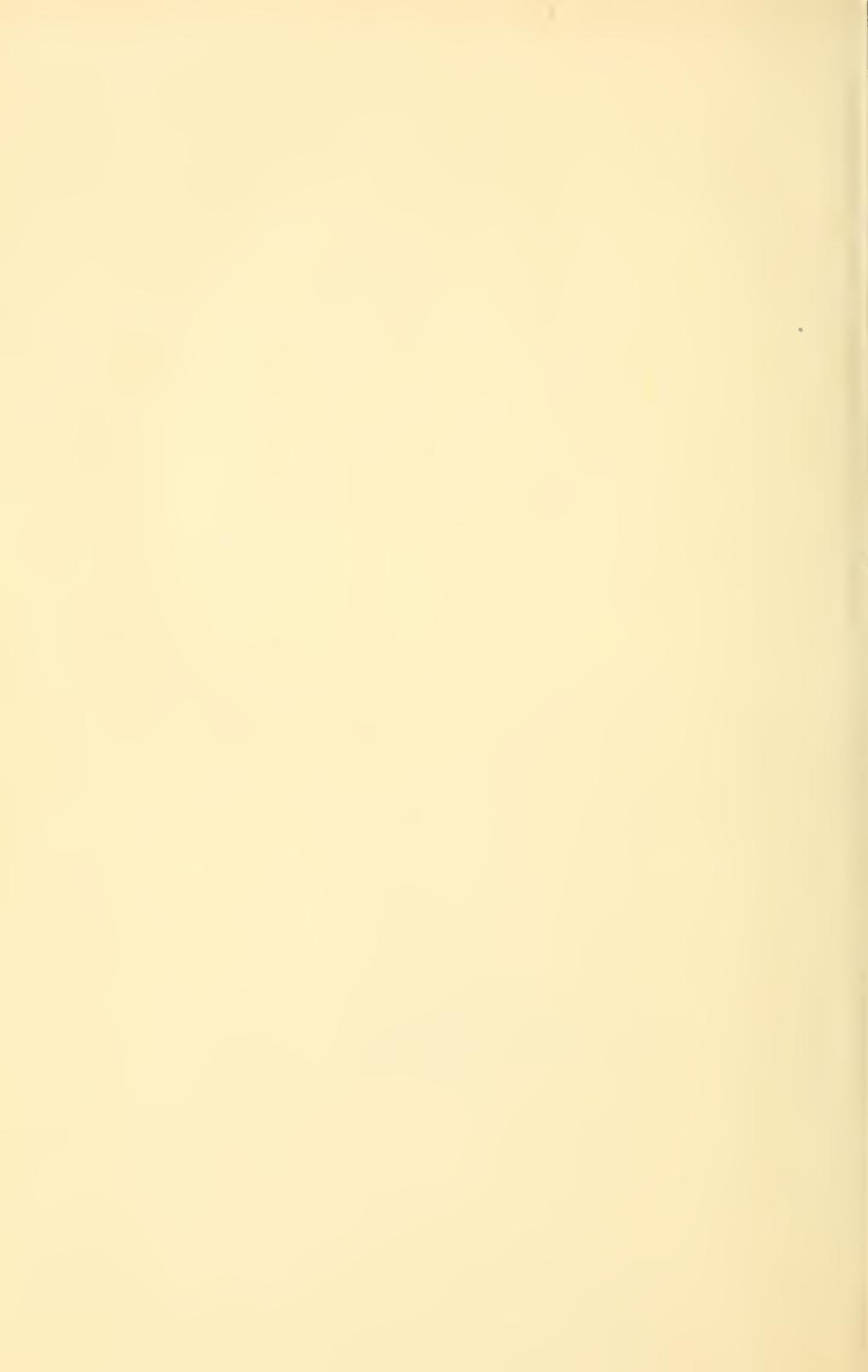
*CLOUD that streams its breath of unseen flowers,
Cloud with spice of bay,
Of roses, lily-breathings, and the powers
Of small violets, or, aloft, black poplars as they quiver !*

*Cloud that streams its song of birds—no bird
Seen to chant the song :
Yet wide and keen as sun-breath it is heard,
All the air itself a voice of voices chiming golden !*

*Mary hath passed by. All plants sweet-leaved,
Sweet-flowered ; birds, sweet-voiced,
Round her passing have their sweetness weaved.
Let us yield our incense up, our anthems and our
homage !*

SOME OF THESE POEMS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN "THE IRISH MONTHLY" AND IN "THE ROSARY." ONE WAS PUBLISHED IN "THE UNIVERSE"

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